



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

REVIEWS

La Riforma Ortografica dell' Inglese, del Francese e dell' Italiano, di Giacomo De Gregorio. Palermo, Tip. Boccone del Povero, 1915. Estr. d. Atti d. R. Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Belle Arti di Palermo, S. 3^a, vol. x.

In this essay the Marquis De Gregorio, the well-known editor of *Studi Glottologici Italiani*, briefly describes the rise of modern movements for the simplification of spelling in English, French, and Italian; criticizes the reforms that have been suggested, and the objections raised against them; and makes some new proposals regarding Italian orthography.

De Gregorio's attitude toward the whole question may be described as scientific and international. The scientist appears in the bold assertion that the object of spelling reform is phonetic accuracy: "to leave no opportunity for errors or uncertainties in pronunciation," an expression the force of which is not lessened by the admission that practical utility demands a more simple and more accurate representation of sounds. It is true that, far from scorning the claims of material advantage, he dwells repeatedly on the need for simplification and regularity for the sake of children and foreigners, but for the very purpose of gaining this material advantage as largely as possible he holds that reforms in the three languages (there is only a passing reference to spelling reform in German) would do well to proceed uniformly as far as possible, and that their common ground is scientific phonetic writing, which is also the only durable ground. This idea is apparent in many of his criticisms of the reforms proposed, and it is with this intention that he makes the fundamental postulate that each separate sound must be represented by one separate sign.

After thus expressing the idea that seems to inform the whole of this essay, it should be said that the author often shows a tenderness for the written word such as is usually ascribed to the man of letters rather than to the word-monger. Again and again he deprecates the defacing ("svisare") of words except for excellent reasons, and this even after pointing out that spelling reform is no new thing, that alterations in the written signs have occurred continually in the past, owing to sound-change outstripping the more

conservative writing, and after saying that experimental phonetics has taught us to attach more importance to sound and less to writing. On the other hand his linguistic sense recoils from wanton destruction of signs that indicate the etymology of a word correctly, and would save such signs wherever it is possible without sacrificing scientific principles. Such a catholic view as this is beyond praise: it is that of Philology itself.

In the brief sketch of the rise of spelling reform in America, Theodore Roosevelt figures imposingly enough to satisfy his most fervent admirers. He is presented as the principal champion of the movement, although it is added that when the Simplified Spelling Board was formed, Professors Calvin Thomas, Brander Mathews, and Thomas Lounsbury, all, apparently, of Yale University, made modifications and additions to the proposal of Roosevelt. The author is acquainted with the first two lists of simplified spellings, but not, it seems, with the others, although he mentions the letter of Secretary Howard to the Members of the Modern Language Association, of March, 1915, and the answers to it.¹

De Gregorio comments favorably on the recommendations of these two lists, excepting that which advises, in the case of "words with the verb-suffix of Greek origin, spelled *-ise* or *-ize*," the adoption of *-ize*. This, he says, is useless and contrary to the standard of agreement between orthography and phonetics. Although in English *z* has the same sound as *s* in the words in question, *z* in the scientific alphabet and in other languages represents a composite sound different from *s*. It is a mistake to refer to the Greek origin, since these words came from French verbs in *-iser*, and not directly from Greek. An obvious explanation in reply would be that the Board were minded to save *s* for the unvoiced sibilant, and to use *z* for the voiced. They were not thinking of the advantage of agreement with spelling in other languages, and were not aiming at phonetic accuracy, but were attempting to promote regularity in English.

The spelling with *-or* of nouns formerly ending in *-our*—already established in America—meets with the approval of the author, all the more because the original Latin ending was *-or*. One wonders

¹ The information on which De Gregorio comments is furnished by an article of Prof. Juan M. Dihigo of the University of Havana, an article that is unknown to the reviewer.

why the Latin origin of these words should be considered, if the Greek origin of verbs in *-ize* ought not to be mentioned. These also came through French, and De Gregorio adds: "Probably the *u* of *ou* in use in England is only a remainder of the *eu* of the French *ardeur*, *couleur*, etc." This hypothesis, however, is difficult to entertain, considering how rare *eu* is in Anglo-Norman, and how frequent is *u* and, to a less extent, *ou*.

The author only modifies his general approval of the suggestions of the Board by remarking that the number of words altered is small compared with the number that would be reformed by a general application of the principles illustrated—it must be remembered that he has seen only the first two lists—and that there are more important reforms to be considered, which would cause the writing of English to approach something like an international standard, toward which all national writing ought to tend.

De Gregorio's hostility to the suggestions of the reformers of French spelling is surprising, since many of his objections are such as would apply to the new English spellings. His chief criticisms are that the reform is not based on any consistent principle; that the signs proposed are often phonetically inaccurate, and sometimes sacrifice etymological indications without achieving accuracy; that some are of a kind that would hinder rather than help foreign students of the language; that some much needed and far-reaching reforms are not proposed because of difficulties peculiar to French.

For example:—To use the sign *gn* for the sound *ñ*, and *ch* for *š* is to depart from the essential principle that each sound be represented by a single sign. To write *qi* for *qui*, *qalifie* for *qualifie*, and at the same time to write *arkéologues* and *considérer*, is to use three signs for the same sound, and *q* is superfluous as a phonetic sign. The *c* which is suggested instead of *s* in *maladrèce*, and for *t* in *atancion*, represents other sounds in phonetic science, in other languages and in French itself, and if the unvoiced sibilant *s* is to be represented by *c*, why keep *s* in *aussi*, and why use *ç* in *réçamant*? The writing *cc* for *ct* in *traduccion* etc. is inferior to the old writing which at least represented two sounds by two signs: here the reformers, to be consistent, should have written *traducçion*, but the more phonetic *traduksion* would have been far preferable. To write *j* for *g* in *jenre* etc. is to use a sign that is not in general use, and which in phonetic science represents a different sound: it would

have been better to keep the *g* which is at least etymological. *An* for *en*, and *en* for *in* represent an approach to phonetic accuracy, but are no help to those who are learning French and also know Latin or one of the other Romance languages: the old writings had the advantage of preserving the Latin vowel. The reformers still write *examen*, *simple*, *renseignement* and *impossible*, which is inconsistent. *S* for final *x* in *ceus* etc. is to substitute one useless sign for another, and considering the daring of the reformers, it is strange that they should be unwilling to eliminate mute vowels, or to represent *ou* by its phonetic equivalent *u*.

The French peculiarity of pronouncing so many of the final consonants before a vowel, but not before another consonant, creates an almost insurmountable difficulty: either *tan* or *tans* for *temps* would disfigure the word and abolish all indication of its etymology, and *tan* for *tant* would not be phonetic before a vowel. The reformers decided to preserve final *s* and *t*, and so were driven to use *êt* for *est*, and *et* for *et*, although the phonetic *ê* and *e* must have been tempting because of their reasonableness.

"All things considered," we are told, "the reform of French orthography presents so many difficulties and of such a kind that, much as we may praise the efforts of the reformers, it can be developed and applied usefully only in a few points, and for the present it will be absolutely necessary to confine it to the alterations which have been accepted by the French Academy." Now the changes accepted by the French Academy are very few indeed.

In Italy on December 10th, 1910, under the auspices of the *Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze*, there was founded the *Società Ortografica Italiana*, and at a meeting in October, 1911, presided over first by Prof. I. Guidi and then by Prof. Pio Rajna, it was resolved to promote the acceptance, for use in elementary schools, of a minimum reform program as follows:

1. The letters *h*, *j* and *q* to be abolished. Examples, *io ò, ieri, kuesto*.

2. The signs *k* and *g* to be used for the gutturals; *c* and *g* (temporarily *ci* and *gi*) for the palatals. Examples, *anke, lingue; traccati* (temporarily *tracciati*), *gorni* (temporarily *giorni*).

3. *gl* and *sc* to be used without a following *i*, before all vowels; *gn* to be kept. Examples, *figlo, gl'antiki, scame, ingegnere*.

4. Accent to be used in parts of *avere* instead of *h*.

The minutes and circulars of the Society were immediately edited with these alterations by Prof. P. A. Goidànich, while a wider reform was held in reserve. This latter contemplated the writing of \tilde{n} for *gn*, \tilde{s} for *sc*, \tilde{l} for *gl*, and special signs for voiced and unvoiced *s* and *z*, and for close and open *e* and *o*.

De Gregorio ably defends the abolishing of *h*, *j*, and *q*, and reasonably proposes that *x* and *y* should be deprived of the limited usage they now enjoy. The former represents no other than the sounds *ks*, and the latter is only another sign for semivocalic *i*. Of the signs proposed for the palatal consonants he speaks as follows:

Italian children are taught to call the letters *c* and *g* "ci" and "gi," and yet are not allowed to pronounce *ca* and *go* "cia" and "gio": for their sake as well as for consistency the different sounds should be distinguished graphically. He himself had formerly proposed the four signs *k* and \acute{c} , *g* and \acute{g} , thus excluding the sign *c* which is used in other languages for different sounds (*s* in English and French, *z* in German, *th* in Spanish). But if *c* were excluded, *g* would remain open to similar objections, and if *g* were preserved it would be unreasonable to banish a simple sign like *c*, which might well be kept for the unvoiced prepalatal. These two are simple sounds, notwithstanding the German writings *tsch* and *dsch* and the English *ch* and *dg*. For the voiced prepalatal he now proposes italic *g* (the sign advocated for the voiced guttural by the Society), and so the four signs would be *k* and *c*, *g* and *g*. It is a mistake, he says, to suppose that *k* is not a national Italian sign, for all mss. of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries have it, especially southern mss. As for the suggested temporary writings *ci* and *gi*, he thinks it would be better to settle now a matter that must be settled sometime.

He admits that the present signs *gn*, *gli*, *sci*, are monstrosities, but the new signs proposed in the minimum program, *gl* and *sc* (without *i*) are not scientific. *gl* is modelled on *gn*, itself indefensible since it is not phonetic even when etymological (*degno*), and *gl* is neither phonetic nor etymological, while to simplify *sci* by dropping the *i* is to cause *c* to play a double rôle. He therefore supports the proposals in the reserve program: \tilde{n} , \tilde{l} , \tilde{s} , the first two of which are already familiar in Spanish.

He also proposes that the sign \hat{i} be used for the plural of nouns

ending in the singular in unaccented *io*. The 2d pers. Pres. Ind. of verbs like *risparmiare* should be written *risparmii*. It is curious that he does not even consider the writing of plurals such as *studi*, and of verb-forms such as *tu risparmi*, which are nevertheless in good use and apparently phonetic.² He is not in favor of using new signs for *k* and *g* palatalized by a following semivocalic *i*, although he is convinced that these are simple sounds like *ĩ* and *ñ*.

"Long vowels," he says, "and consonants uttered with energy, are ordinarily represented by doubling the sign," a statement which, as regards vowels, is true of only very few words. It has often been pointed out, and has been demonstrated experimentally,³ that stressed vowels before single consonants are much longer than before doubled consonants, but these quantities do not appear in the written word. The expression "consonants uttered with energy" and his saying later that the writing of doubled consonants is "not scientific," seems to show that De Gregorio holds that doubled consonants represent energy but not length, and yet Josselyn showed that they take more time to pronounce than single consonants. No change in the writing is suggested.

The interests of foreigners are shockingly neglected by the author where he disapproves of the reformers' intention to distinguish the qualities of *e* and *o*. His reasons are that popular pronunciation of these vowels differs in the various regions of Italy, and that the public should be spared the burden of deciding how to write them. The "vernaculars" do differ, but they differ consistently, and a Roman will always say *Rôma*, and a Venetian *bêne*, while a Tuscan will always say *Róma* and *bêne*. If a foreigner, in view of the difficulty, undertakes to disregard the qualities, he will speak a language that will not sound like any Italian, but if he reasonably chooses to adopt the Tuscan pronunciation he will find it very difficult to learn so long as the qualities are not indicated in the writing. To mark the difference between the close and open stressed vowels would not be an excessive burden, and would be a step toward uniformity in Italy as well as an immense boon to foreigners. The problem of distinguishing voiced and unvoiced *s* and *z*, which De Gregorio also sets aside, is much less important, but it is again dis-

² Cf. Malagoli, *Ortoepia e Ortografia Italiana Moderna*, Milano, 1905, p. 29.

³ Cf. Josselyn, *Phonétique Italienne*, Paris, 1900.

appointing to find that he has no recommendations to make as to the use of new accents. He merely reports that the "Congresso Ortografico" was in favor of written accents to distinguish homonyms of spelling such as *tórre* and *tòrre*, and that Malagoli has made a list of the least known proparoxytones, with the accents noted. It is the proparoxytones that cause the greatest difficulty to foreigners, and it would be a great advantage to have them all marked. If this had been done in the past we should have avoided the traditional mis-pronunciation of Milton's *L'Allegro* and of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, and *Trissino* would no longer mean a trap.

De Gregorio's conclusion, which is printed with the new spelling, meets common objections to spelling-reform; advocates the preparation of a manual of writing, new dictionaries and the promulgation of the manual of the Società Ortografica; comments on the arrangement of the new alphabet, and predicts that the new orthography will be stable because it will be phonetic—he does not consider the possibility of sound-change in modern times. The introduction of the new system will not be more difficult than was that of the decimal system of weights and measures: it will soon be familiar. "Then there will be no more doubt as to the meaning of letters in their various positions, no need of further alterations, no more differences of pronunciation among the different nations. And Italian orthography, already so transparent, will become, after undergoing a little reformation, actually perfect, so as to be the model for the writing of all the other languages." 'Utopia' is the word that naturally occurs to one on reading these concluding sentences, but it is a word that is already almost phonetically spelled in all languages. However, before the desired *Pax Romana* can be established, the "difficile" French and the stubborn English will have to be overcome,—to say nothing of the "irto increscioso alemanno."

J. E. SHAW.
